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DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/MTS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: INDONESIA PASSES LAW ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF ACEH

11. Summary: The Indonesian National Parliament late on July 11 passed the long awaited Law on the Administration of Aceh.

The passage was welcomed by the Aceh Monitoring Mission, which is meeting with the parties to the Memorandum of Understanding of August 15, 2005 before offering its assessment of the law. Post is examining the provisions of the new law and will provide a more thorough analysis in the near future. End summary.

12. The new Law on the Administration of Aceh was passed by the Indonesian National Parliament (DPR) late in the day on July 11 in Jakarta. All eleven parties in the lower house approved the bill, indicating a broad consensus of support within Indonesia as a whole, if not also within Aceh. This consensus included the Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), which had been the most outspoken opponent of Acehnese autonomy, and the United Development Party (PPP), which has broad support within Aceh. Initial assessments by political observers suggest that, while a range of constituencies and NGOs remain dissatisfied with specific provisions of the law, it is likely to stand and can serve as a basis for general elections in Aceh later this year. The law will be formally presented to the government of Aceh on July 13. President Yudhoyono must sign the law within 15 days if he wishes to endorse it; otherwise the law automatically takes effect within 30 days of its passage. There have been a number of contradictory statements about the law and its congruence with the Memorandum of Understanding of August 15, 2005. However, although the GAM has yet to discuss the law formally, some GAM leaders have stated that the law is for the most part consistent with the MOU.

13. The Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) issued a brief statement on July 11, shortly after the law's passage, welcoming the DPR's decision as the product of a democratic process and as a step furthering the peace process begun by the August, 2005 MOU. The AMM said that it plans to consult with the parties to the MOU, including a meeting in Banda Aceh on July 12, which was to be followed by a press conference.

14. We obtained a copy of the law ahead of its official promulgation late on July 12 and will offer a more thorough analysis of its contents, as well as its public reception, in the near future.

PASCOE